Author’s response to reviews

Title: Exploring barriers to seeking health care among Kenyan Somali women with female genital mutilation: a qualitative study

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Version: 3 Date: 20 Oct 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

With this cover letter, the revised manuscript no. IHHR-D-19-00031R2 titled “Exploring barriers to seeking health care among Kenyan Somali women with female genital mutilation: a qualitative study” is enclosed. Thank you for the insightful comments and suggestions, they have significantly improved the manuscript. All the comments have been addressed in the relevant pages as indicated in the response below.

In the main document, the comments are reflected in form of highlights in YELLOW.

1. The health complications were listed (lines 54 - 67) but, as far as I understand, this is based on a review of the literature. The authors have still not clearly explained how these complications were defined/understood by the study population.
   • This has been addressed in line 126-138.
   • This has also been addressed in line 159-167
2. Authors have now stated (among the limitations) the fact that it cannot be affirmed that the barriers faced by this population are due to their FGM status specifically. However, as a reader, I think this section could be further strengthened (I suggest revising some of the sentences for clarity). This has been addressed in line 559-576.
3. The issue of 'normalization' of FGM related long-term complications is only very briefly addressed in the limitations section. I would have liked to read more about this in the discussion and/or limitations section. This has been addressed in line 485-497, This has also been addressed in line 565-569
4. Lines 149 to 167 contain several unclear sentences (i.e. section 149-152). Also, some sections seem repetitive (i.e. 157-164). This section could be further improved for clarity. The unclear lines 149-152 are corrected in line 159-162. The repetitions in line 157-164 are addressed in line 126-138
5. Also, while authors do explain how they asked about FGM-related complication (general questions on health were asked, followed by specific probes) I would like to know what these specific probes were as this would clarify the spectrum of health conditions that were examined. It still remains unclear if they only asked about FGM-related complications, or if general health conditions were also explored. I suggest this should be specified. This has been addressed in line 126-138.
6. 564 -565: The concept 'FGM-interventions' is unclear: interventions to improve health care?. This
has been addressed in line 545-548 as well as in line 582-584
7. All the other comments by reviewer 2 have been addressed and highlighted in yellow
8. A thorough relook into the manuscript including English proof reading has been carried out.